

Remarks

The Office Action dated June 29, 2005 has been carefully considered. The present Amendment is intended to be a complete response thereto and to place the case in condition for allowance.

In the Office Action, the Examiner acknowledged the Election of Species, and agreed with the Applicants' traversal that claims 9 and 10 read on the elected species. As a consequence, claims 1-6, 9 and 10 were examined and claims 7 and 8 were withdrawn from further consideration.

The Examiner rejected claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by JP 11305063 (Seiko); rejected claims 2-4, 9 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over JP 11305063. The Examiner objected to claims 5 and 6 as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but stated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including any intervening claims. The Examiner returned an initialed copy of Form PTO-1449 indicating consideration of the references cited by Applicants in the Information Disclosure Statement. The Examiner also acknowledged receipt of certified copies of the priority documents and acknowledged the acceptability of the original drawings filed June 25, 2003.

Claims 1-6, 9 and 10 are pending. Claims 2, 9 and 10 are cancelled without prejudice to the subject matter therein. Claim 1 was amended to include the recital of previous claim 2. Claims 9 and 10 are cancelled as being redundant in view of the addition of the recitals of claim 2 to claim 1. Allowable claims 5 and 6 are amended to be in independent form, including the limitations of previous claim 1 and previous claim 4 on which they originally depended, as suggested by the Examiner, thereby overcoming the objection to claims 5 and 6.

In addition, as these amendments are made by adding claim recitals present in the original application, no new matter has been added.

With respect to the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by JP '063, the present application has been amended by adding to claim 1 the recitals of previous claim 2 by adding the phrase, "the holder and the holder heating unit being inclinable with respect to a horizontal plane."

JP '063 discloses a heat adhesive bonding apparatus 1 comprising: a heat block 3 having retainers 2a, a heated block 2 and a controller 6. It is the understanding of the undersigned attorney that JP '063 teaches in paragraph [0010] that the retainers (holders) 2a, which hold the ferrules F1, are juxtaposed substantially horizontally on the heated block 2. Therefore, the retainers 2a and heated block 2 are not inclinable with respect to the horizontal plane. It is the understanding of the undersigned that JP '063 fails to teach or suggest that the holder heating unit is configurable to support and heat the holder wherein the holder and heating unit are inclinable with respect to the horizontal plane. By contrast, the holder 5 and heating unit 9 in the present invention are inclinable with respect to the horizontal plane in order to make the adhering and fixing operation easier and more reliable (see page 9, lines 5-14). Hence, JP '063 does not disclose all of the limitations of claim 1, as currently presented. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) rejection of claim 1 is respectfully requested.

Claims 2-4, 9 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over JP 11305063. Claims 2, 9 and 10 have been cancelled without prejudice. Applicants respectfully traverse the 103(a) rejection of claims 3 and 4. As mentioned above, JP '063 fails to teach or suggest a holder and holder heating block that are inclinable with respect to

the horizontal plane. As claims 3 and 4 depend on claim 1, which recites an apparatus with an inclinable holder and heating block, applicant respectfully submits that claims 3 and 4 would not be obvious to one of skill in the art from the teachings of JP '063.

In the present invention, the thermosetting adhesive agent is injected into the adhesive injection hole 27D for adhering and fixing the portion of the multicore optical fibers 25 to the through holes 27A of the ferrules 27. After injection of adhesive, the holder 5 and holder heating unit 9 can be inclined as shown in Figure 5C of the specification for heating and setting of the adhesive agent. Having the holder inclined in this manner prevents adhesive from leaking out of the ferrule 27 on the side of the multicore optical fiber 25. This is desirable, because adhesive that has leaked onto the multicore optical fiber can harden and cause the fiber to lose flexibility. By contrast, the fixed horizontal orientation of the retainers (holders) of JP '063 would allow adhesive to leak out onto the optical fiber and solidify, causing the flexibility of the fiber to decrease.

Further, because the present invention allows for the injection of adhesive, more adhesive can be added to the ferrule after the initial adhesive has set. This allows for the use of more adhesive, causing more reliable bonding between the multicore optical fiber and the ferrule. By contrast, it is the understanding of the undersigned that paragraph [0009] of JP '063 teaches that the heat bonding apparatus 1 is configured to adhesively bond the ferrules F1 and optical fibers F2 under conditions where each of the optical fibers has been inserted into each through hole of the ferrules with/via adhesive. In the apparatus disclosed in JP '063, it would not be possible to add further adhesive to the ferrule to increase the bond between the optical fiber and the ferrule.

Based on the above, Applicant respectfully submits that the claims as presented are not obvious under JP '063. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection are respectfully requested.

Claims 5 and 6 are objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 5 and 6 have been amended to be presented as independent claims that incorporate all of the limitations of previous claims 1 and 4. Hence, the claims are now allowable. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to claims 5 and 6 are respectfully requested.

As all grounds of rejection and objection have been addressed and overcome, entry of this amendment and issuance of a Notice of Allowance of the claims, as now presented, are respectfully solicited.

In the event that there are any questions relating to this Amendment or to the application in general, it would be appreciated if the Examiner would telephone the undersigned attorney concerning such questions so that the prosecution of this application may be expedited.

Please charge any shortage or credit any overpayment of fees to BLANK ROME LLP, Deposit Account No. 23-2185 (000004-00679). In the event that a petition for an extension of time is required to be submitted herewith and in the event that a separate petition does not accompany this response, Applicants hereby petition under 37 C.F.R. 1.136(a) for an extension of time for as many months as are required to render this submission timely.

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Any fees due are authorized above.

Respectfully submitted,

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